

The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

Ohio State Engineer

Title: An Engineer Goes to a Prom

Creators: Postlewaite, Donald Elbridge

Issue Date: 1940-03

Publisher: Ohio State University, College of Engineering

Citation: Ohio State Engineer, vol. 23, no. 4 (March, 1940), 2-3.

URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/35680>

AN ENGINEER GOES TO A PROM

By DONALD ELBRIDGE POSTLEWAITE

It's a gloomy scene before us; we see a young man sitting before a desk littered with papers. A desk lamp throws a pale light upon such articles as chemistry, physics, calculus, and mechanics text books (to mention only a few), pencils, pens, tee-square, drawing instruments, and of course, the inevitable Slide Rule. If we examine more closely, the student is carefully putting the finishing touches on a graph sheet—the clock strikes three. Then in rapid succession, a drop of ink, a sudden jerk, a blotch on the graph sheet, and another ruined paper hits the waste basket. Our hero is mad now. Up he rises and promises himself compensation for these many hard hours of study by devoting one night of nights, not to the books but to a dance. Thus, according to the old legend, the Engineers' Prom "was brought to pass".

Typical engineers upon whose shoulders rested the burden were the members of the Engineers' Council. As early as their first meeting, October 26, 1939, the problems of staging this dance were discussed. Realizing that this was to be that one big moment in the engineer's life, no effort was spared to arrange for the very best of everything and this, of course, included the use of the Men's Gym. Obstacles were encountered when it was learned that a minimum of five hundred couples would be required to permit the use of the gym. But like true engineers who thrive on solving difficulties, the council boys dug in, circulated a petition, and secured the necessary number of subscribers who agreed to attend this dance. The initial victory was won. Committees were appointed which included: band, Reiss and Detwiler; decorations, Yoder and Huber; publicity, Petersen, chairman, McQuaide, Engelmann, Hallz, Underwood, Salter, and Snyder; gym, Bell,

chairman, Derbyshire; tickets, Lanson, chairman, and Miller; concessions, Miller. In course of time, problems concerning a band, tickets, programs, publicity, and concessions were disposed of.

For days preceding the dance, members of the Council were reported lurking in every corner, awaiting their prey, and at the sight of the tell-tale slide rule, pouncing upon the victim and extracting one dollar and fifty cents, tax included, and returning to said victim, a ticket to the Prom.

Finally came that fateful day, Friday, February 2, or to be more specific, that night of nights, February 2 (February 3?).

It seemed that some of the departments were a little more gastronomically inclined than others; mainly, the Ceramic and Electricals. The Ceramic lads brought their lasses to Pomerene Hall for a banquet which was served in the Medallion Room. Between mouthfuls of soup, each male present introduced his young lady (or wife as the case may be). Lovely flowers were set upon the tables but it was later learned that someone mistook these for his salad, and the results were obvious. Name cards were placed about the tables to eliminate the seating problem and about thirty couples were present. Professor Carruthers, Ceramic Department, was toastmaster and Professor Weed, Engineering Experiment Station, described his trip into Florida which included some real fish stories.

The electrical boys went the ceramics one better, and put on their "soup and fish" and treated their ladies to a formal dinner held at the Beechwold Villa on North High Street. The attendance was thirty-one couples (I told you that they went the ceramic boys one better) and most of the faculty and their wives were present. Laurence Kempton, president of the A.I.E.E., presided and the professors were called upon for impromptu speeches. This is an annual affair for the E.E.'s, and adds to the importance of the Prom.

It was obvious from the very start that this dance had the proper formula for success, a good, versatile orchestra, beautiful decorations, reasonable room for dancing, a congenial crowd, lovely girls, good looking boys, and what not. Brad Hunt and his orchestra featuring Billy Carmicheal, songstress, and the Huntsmen, a trio composed of band members, provided the music. How Brad was able to please both those who like it sweet



and those who like it hot is one of the deepest mysteries, but he not only did this but presented several good tunes of his own composition. He'll undoubtedly prove one of the best bands appearing on the campus for this year.

The decorations were grand and with the proper illuminating effects included, made a lovely background for the dancers. The programs which were given were extremely well received both physically (the girls grabbed them up for that "hope chest") and in favorable comment.

It was a thrilling sight to see the four hundred and seven odd couples gracefully dancing (especially to the "behind the eight ball" Council members). To do the ladies justice, a detailed description of each formal should be presented herewith, but since that would require a catalog to print it in and more important, since the author (that's me) never could understand that stuff written in society columns and frankly admits his ignorance, we shall avoid the issue and emphatically state that each lady had on a distinctive and different dress. During an intermission Gerald Gambs, Engineers' Council President, gave a welcome to the crowd on behalf of the Engineering Council and introduced Dean MacQuigg who similarly welcomed those present. Then, as the dancers crowded around the bandshell, Texnikoi Fraternity began a new tradition by conducting a tapping ceremony to inform the neophytes of their election. The members of the organization were presented on the bandstand and were charged by Dean MacQuigg to perform their task. Each member in his turn wandered through the crowd, tapped the initiate and conducted him back to the platform. Fifteen juniors and seniors were selected to join on the basis of their character and work in extra-curricular activities, and each received the personal congratulations from the Dean.



Councilmen McQuaide, Gambs, Peterson figuring up the dance finances—In the Black!

Dean and Mrs. MacQuigg and Junior Dean and Mrs. Turnbull were the chaperons, and several members of the faculty were present. Of course this may be accounted for since the heads of the departments were given complimentary tickets.

But all good things must end, so at the stroke of one the 1940 Engineers' Prom was only a memory, but what a memory!

Every engineer has a flare for facts and figures so a few are listed here. Services required included six uniformed policemen (don't trust us, eh?) three janitors, five checkroom attendants, one public address operator, one electrician, and one person to operate the lights, not to mention others to set up the platform, place chairs, and prepare the floor.

But now we shift back to the first scene, the same conditions exist, the clock tolls three (A.M.), the ruined graph hits the waste paper basket, but now our hero is happy for he knows that his dance was a definite success, that the gym is available next year, that his dance has at last taken its place along with the big proms and balls as an important event on the campus.